

CHAPIN ; Capt. DEWHURST ; Lt.-Col. A. DELMÉ-RADCLIFFE ; T. W. HERBERT ; R. A. MOLDEN ; R. M. PADDISON ; G. DE H. VAIZEY, jun. ; W. WATTS ; R. H. WHITE ; W. L. WILLETT.

A SPECIAL MEETING was held at 5.30 P.M. at the Zoological Society's Lecture Room on the 9th November 1921, when a most interesting series of cinematograph pictures of certain phases in the life-history of the Cuckoo was shown by Mr. E. P. CHANCE.

This film was the result of four years concentrative study of one particular Cuckoo ; and it is no exaggeration to state that such a remarkable piece of field-work has never had its equal. It would be rash to prophesy, but there seems little probability that it will for some time to come, at any rate, be surpassed in completeness or for the deliberate, patient, and carefully planned scheme and scope of its operations.

We congratulate Mr. Chance on a unique piece of scientific field-study.

Mr. W. L. SCLATER forwarded the following notes on African Birds :—

PLECTROPTERUS GAMBENSIS.

An examination of the not very satisfactory series of the Spur-winged Goose in the British Museum inclines me to believe that those from south of the Zambesi can be distinguished from those from the rest of Africa by the greater amount of black on the underparts and by their black under tail-coverts.

Plectropterus niger was founded on a live individual in the Zoological Gardens. It was imported from Cape Town, but was stated to have come originally from Zanzibar—an unlikely locality for such a bird. It probably was a South-African bird.

SARKIDIORNIS MELANOTOS.

(Claude Grant ('Ibis,' 1915, p. 72) states that African examples of this Goose are constantly smaller than those

from India. I have not found this to be the case to any appreciable extent. The wings of nine African males measure 350–390 mm., average 364; of four Indian males 370–380 mm., average 372. This seems hardly sufficient ground for separating into two races.

ANAS UNDULATA RUEPPELLI.

Neumann (Journ. Ornith. 1904, p. 327) has pointed out that the Abyssinian Yellow-billed Ducks can be distinguished from those of South Africa by the colour of the speculum, which is blue and not green, and by their darker underparts. An examination of the specimen in the British Museum confirms what Neumann states, while birds from Uganda are somewhat intermediate.

THALASSORNIS LEUCONOTUS INSULARIS.

The White-backed Duck of Madagascar has been separated as a distinct species by Richmond (Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. xix. p. 678, 1897). It appears to be slightly smaller, but the colour-differences given by Richmond hardly hold good when a good series of African examples are examined. It certainly cannot be regarded as anything but a subspecies.

ASIO CAPENSIS (Smith).

Sir Andrew Smith, in his essays on African Zoology, in the 2nd series of the 'South African Quarterly Journal,' gave the specific name *capensis* to no fewer than five Owls—i. e., *Noctua* (now *Glaucidium*) *capensis*, p. 313, *Scops* (now *Otus*) *capensis*, p. 314, *Otus* (now *Asio*) *capensis*, p. 316, *Strix* (now *Tyto*) *capensis*, p. 317, and *Bubo capensis*, p. 317.

Owing to the present use of the generic name *Otus* for the Scops Owls, it appears to be necessary under the rules to abandon the name *capensis* for the Marsh-Owl usually known as *Asio capensis* (Smith), as it is preoccupied by *Scops* (now *Otus*) *capensis* (Smith). The only name available for the species appears to be *tingitanus* (*Phasmoptynx capensis* var. *tingitanus* Loche, Explor. Scient. de l'Algérie, Ois. i. p. 99, 1867)—a rather awkward situation; and, if the

South-African Marsh-Owl is to be regarded as distinct from the Algerian form, a new subspecific name must be given to it. I would propose to name it after Sir Andrew Smith, and the three forms of the Marsh-Owl will then stand as follows:—

Asio tingitanus tingitanus (Loche). North Africa.

Asio tingitanus andrewsmithi Sel., nom. nov. pro *Otus*
(now *Asio*) *capensis* Smith. South-east Africa.

Asio tingitanus major (Schl.). Madagascar.

TYTO ALBA.

The very pale race of the Barn-Owl which is found in southern Arabia and also in Palestine and Muscat is called by Erlanger (J. f. O. 1904, p. 243) *Strix flammea splendens* Brehm ('Naumannia,' 1855, p. 270). Hartert, however (Nov. Zool. 1918, p. 40), states that the type of *Strix splendens* Brehm (Vögelfang, p. 40, 1855) came from Cairo and that it is identical with *Tyto alba alba*.

The pale Arabian race seems therefore to require a new name, and I would propose to call it

Tyto alba erlangeri, subsp. nov.

Type, a female, from Lehej, nr. Aden, in south-west Arabia. Collected by W. Dodson, 24.viii.99. Now in the British Museum, Reg. no. 1900.8.5.44.

As pointed out by Hartert (Vögel pal. Faun. p. 1038), it is distinguished from *T. a. alba*, which it otherwise closely resembles, by its less-feathered tarsus; the whole of the tarsus and the toes are bare or covered only by a few scanty hair-like feathers.

There are three examples from near Aden in the Museum collection, as well as others from Muscat, Babylon, and Palestine, all of which appear to be referable to this form.

Genus DENDROPICOS.

The genus *Dendropicos* was first proposed by Malherbe. The name appears on pp. 316 & 338 of his well-known paper on the classification of the Picidæ published in

the 30th volume of the 'Memoirs of the Academy of Metz.' The name also appears in the 'Revue et Magazin de Zoologie' for 1849, p. 532. According to Sherborne, this latter reference dates from November—the first-named appeared "after May." I am therefore inclined to take this as the original reference.

The type of *Dendropicos* is given by Gray (Cat. Gen. Subgen. Bds. p. 92) as *Picus affinis* Swainson, a Brazilian species now placed in the genus *Dendrobates*. Hargitt (Cat. Bds. Brit. Mus. xviii. p. 293) makes *Dendropicus cardinalis* (now *D. fuscescens*) the type. Neither of these two species are mentioned by Malherbe in his original description; so both these subsequent designations fall. I therefore propose to designate *Dendropicus lafresnayi* Malherbe the type of the genus *Dendropicus*.

DENDROPICOS OBSOLETUS CAMERUNENSIS Reichenow,
Journ. Ornith. 1918, p. 437. Uam and Bakari, Cameroon.

This name is preoccupied by *Dendropicus camerunensis* Sharpe, Ibis, 1907, p. 443: River Ja, Cameroon—a form belonging to quite another section of the genus; in fact, the *D. obsoletus* group is usually placed by authors in the genus *Yungipicus*. It is necessary, however, to provide a new name for the Cameroon Brownback Woodpecker, and I suggest

***Yungipicus obsoletus batesi*, nom. nov.**

Col. MEINERTZHAGEN made the following remarks on a recently described race of *Phalaropus fulicarius* :—

In the Bull. B. O. C. vol. xlii. p. 8 (1921), Mr. Iredale described the breeding Grey Phalarope of Spitsbergen as *Phalaropus fulicarius jourdaini*, on account of the paler and narrower edgings to the feathers of the upper parts.

The material at Mr. Iredale's disposal was that in the British Museum, of which he says the Palæarctic series was complete and the Nearctic not so extensive. Mr. Iredale had a good series of spring-passage migrants, shot in May,